to pass the hand through the placenta was, no doubt (and might have been still more), mischievous. We cannot positively say that the death of the child was caused by this procedure; but most assuredly its chances of being born alive were considerably lessened by it, as the tissue of the placenta must have been more or less injured by trying to perforate this organ.—*Assoc. Med. Journ.*, March 1 and 15; April 12, 1856.

31. *On the Depth at which the Placenta is implanted in the Uterus.*—Dr. Von Ritgen has given an elaborate and interesting illustration of the various seats of attachment of the placenta, other than to the neck of the womb. He refers to the method discovered in recent times, of determining after delivery the height at which the placenta was attached, by measuring the distance of the rent in the membranes made by the passage of the liquor amnii and fœtus from the margin of the placenta.

The bag burst at the edge of the placenta in 22 cases. It burst at one inch from the edge in 8 cases; between one and two inches in 12 cases; two inches in 7 cases; between two and three inches in 16 cases; three inches in 5 cases; between three and four inches in 4 cases; four inches in 6 cases; between four and five inches in 8 cases; five inches in 3 cases; six inches in 6 cases; and eight inches in 3 cases.

It follows, that since the distance of the edge of the placenta from the rent is absolutely decisive as to the distance of the edge of the placenta from the os uteri, that the edge of the placenta rested on the os uteri in 22 cases, and was within one inch in 32 cases, within two inches in 49 cases, and so on.

This proves that the placenta has commonly a much lower seat than has hitherto been believed.

It also appears that smallness of the ovum has a closer relation to lower seat of the placenta than is to be accounted for by the simple diminution of all the dimensions of the uterus.—*Brit. and For. Med.-Chirurg. Rev.*, April, 1856, from *Monatsschrf. für Geburtsk.*, Oct. 1855.

32. *Period of Exclusion of Placenta.*—Dr. Von Ritgen says, that instructions were given in the hospital for many years, not to remove a detached placenta without the express permission of the director. The reason was, to ascertain whether the leaving behind the detached placenta would cause mischief to the mother by absorption of the dead matter. This rule was followed for a time, so far as to allow the placenta to remain several days, and until the foul smell became insupportable; but at a later period it was not carried to this extreme, after it was ascertained that *no absorption of decomposing constituents of placenta ever took place, except in cases of fleshy growth of the placenta to the uterus.*

Summarily expressed, the detached placenta remained fifty-two times, or in about one-half the cases, less than four hours in the uterus; and in the other half, between four and fourteen and a half hours.

The spontaneously completely detached placenta was removed artificially in 3 cases on account of hemorrhage. In 1 case it was removed on account of spasmodic pains. In 2 cases after operations. In all the rest, the placenta was removed on account of severe after-pains, heavy pressure of the vagina, difficulty of micturition, disturbance of rest and sleep.

[We cannot but express the hope that the Professor is satisfied with these results, and that he will not consider it necessary to carry this experiment further.—Rep.]—*Ibid.*

MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE AND TOXICOLOGY.

33. *Effects of the Humours of the Toad on the Animal Economy.* By M. Gavini.—It is a generally received opinion that the toad is venomous. Naturalists admit this; Buffon says that the toad and serpents are capable of killing one another by their bite and their poison. Experiments recently performed

on animals and detailed before the Society of Biology by M. Vulpian, have established the venomous power of the toad. The following case exhibits the action of the poison of the reptile on the human system:—

Towards the close of the month of June, which was hot and dry, a child, aged 6, in company with some other little boys, was throwing stones at a large toad, when he suddenly felt something spirted into his right eye. He was subsequently attacked with spasmodic pain in the same eye, which appeared only slightly injected with blood. About two hours after there was coma, continual yawning, incapability of keeping the eyelids open, subsultus tendinum; he carried such objects as were within his reach to his mouth to bite them; he frequently discharged an abundance of urine of the natural colour; his bowels were torpid; there was aversion to food and drink. When up the child's face was much altered; there was continual agitation of the head and arms. At one time he whimpered, at another he cried; subsequently, he fell into a state of coma. This condition lasted two days, after which alvine dejections, containing lumbrici, were obtained.

On the sixth day of his illness he was in a state of apathy, or sort of stupor; the pulse was regular.

After a period of calm he left his bed and ran like a mad person through the house. He was constantly howling, his eyes were injected with blood, the tongue was dry, the pulse regular, there was no febrile heat of body.

On the tenth day the only symptoms were stupor and inability to speak—a condition which has now lasted for two years.—*Dublin Med. Press*, April 9th, from *Gaz. Méd. de Paris*, March 22, 1856, and *Correspond. Scien. in Roma.*

---

34. *Method for the Detection of Phosphorus in Cases of Poisoning.*—E. MITSCHERLICH considers the following the most delicate method for the detection of phosphorus in toxicological cases: The substance to be examined is distilled with sulphuric acid and water from a flask, and the vapour conducted through a glass tube into a vertical glass receiver. This receiver passes through the bottom of a broad glass cylinder, filled with cold water, which is constantly renewed in the usual manner, so that the hot water escapes from the top, and the cold water enters at the bottom. Under the lower end of the receiver, which passes through the bottom of the cooler, a vessel is placed to collect the distillate.

If phosphorus is present, its vapour passes over with the steam into the receiver, and it may be seen where the vapour enters the cool portion of the receiver, as a distinct illumination in the dark, which long continues. Generally, an illuminated ring is observed. From substances, such as flour, which only contain one hundred-thousandth part of phosphorus, three ounces of fluid can be distilled off, and the distillation be continued for half an hour without the illumination ceasing. After such an experiment, the flask and its contents may be exposed to the air for fourteen days, and the distillation repeated with the development of the illumination.

When volatile bodies, as ether, alcohol, and oil of turpentine, are present, which destroy the illumination of the phosphorus, the ether and alcohol must be distilled off, and then the illumination will appear. Oil of turpentine prevents the illumination; but such an admixture is not likely to occur in forensic investigations. If ammonia be present, its detrimental influence may be prevented by the addition of sulphuric acid.—*Lancet*, April 26, 1856.